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About Eat More Kale

How the shirts are made:

First, I start with a blank t-shirt. Not just any t-shirt, but a [Comfort Colors](#) shirt dyed by a local company up here in Vermont. Barry T. Chouinard, Inc., is a local vendor from Northfield and a great little company to work with. They're an environmentally-minded shop with that small business feel and an artisinal quality product. The first time I got my hands on one of their shirts I knew they were the ones to use. These are some of the best clothes money can buy and their quality, style and earthy colors are the key to my success.

Not only are their products great but so are their methods. Their computer-controlled dyeing process uses 2/3 less water and utilities than the standard dye operation does. They responsibly treat all the dye run-off and recycle a good deal of the water they use as well. Their shirts are dyed with soft-fade pigment and direct dye colors for that vintage look that commercial dyes just can't match.

My wife Melissa helped me build my workshop above our garage. There, a few close friends help me apply the designs one-at-a-time, using a silk screen frame, a squeegee and a hand-made stencil. My shirts are the opposite of machine fabricated; my process is much less efficeint than it could



my studio/garage

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1) Pick the stencil.



2) Line it up.




3) Apply the ink.



4) Squeegee it.



5) Carefully lift.



6) Ta-da!

My method is very simple. I cut all my stencils out by hand onto a sheet of plastic. I find the stencil I want to use and then I line it up over a shirt. I place my silk screen over it. Using my trusty squeegee, I press the black, water-soluble ink through the screen and onto the shirt. I use water-soluble ink to produce a subtle, flexible image, unlike the hard plastic prints that mass-merchandisers use on their shirts. At this point the shirt is printed, but still wet.

To make it permanent after printing, I heat-set the printed design with an iron before washing the shirt for good measure. The first washing softens the black print a tiny bit, giving it a nicely faded look without having to wash it 100x. All my shirts are preshrunk and as soft as your last favorite tee was before it fell apart. As you can see, this isn't a factory line. I handle every t-shirt myself. I'm sure there are more efficient ways to make a shirt, but I like things the way they are.

